

GLOSSARY

adapt- to change or adjust to fit the environment

adaptation- an adjustment to environmental conditions; a modification of an organism or its parts that helps it survive.

algae- simple, aquatic plants without roots, stems, and leaves, but with chlorophyll.

annual- living and growing for only one year or season

aquatic- pertaining to water.

bacteria- single-celled organisms that aid in the breaking down or decomposition of material

bay- a body of water partially enclosed by land but with an outlet to the ocean.

bayland- the land surrounding a bay, comprised mostly of salt marshes and salt ponds.

biodegradable- capable of being broken down to simple compounds, especially into harmless products, by the action of microorganisms.

biodiversity- the number of different kinds of living things in an area. The more variety among different kinds of living things, the higher the diversity.

bird banding- attachment of identification tags to individual birds to help scientists study bird population dynamics and migration routes.

brackish- a mixture of freshwater and seawater; containing a moderate amount of salt; less salty than ocean water.

buoyant- the quality of rising or floating in a liquid.

carnivore- an animal that eats primarily other animals; meat eater.

carrion- a dead or decaying animal.

caterpillar- a wormlike insect larva, usually the larva of a butterfly or moth.

chrysalis- the form of an insect between larval and adult stage, in a case or cocoon.

cocoon- a protective case which an insect forms as it enters the pupal stage.

community- a neighborhood; a place where a person, animal or plant is able to find all it needs for survival: food, water, shelter and space.

creek- a small stream of water, especially a shallow or intermittent tributary to a river.

crustaceans- animals, such as crabs and shrimp, with an exoskeleton (outer shell) and jointed appendages and bodies.

consumer- all animals which cannot make their own food and are dependent on plants (or animals that eat plants) as a source of energy.

debris- rubbish; broken, scattered remains of living or non-living things (inorganic materials, trash, litter)

deciduous- plants which lose their leaves at the end of the growing season, usually in autumn.

decompose- to break down into more basic elements (decay).

decomposer- an organism (such as bacteria) that breaks down dead plants and animals into more basic elements, releasing nutrients.

density- the amount of organisms in a known area.

detritus- dead plant and animal material that has decomposed into small bits and is found suspended in water; it is an important source of food for some animals.

diatom- single-celled algae with cell walls made of silica.

diurnal- active or occurring in the daytime.

dormant- asleep or inactive.

ecology- the study of the interrelationship of organisms with their environments.

ecosystem- a system made up of a community of living things and the physical environment with which they interact.

elevation- the height of an area relative to sea level; for example, the elevation on top of a mountain might be 10,000 ft. above sea level.

endangered- a species in danger of extinction.

estuary- a body of water where fresh and saltwater mix.

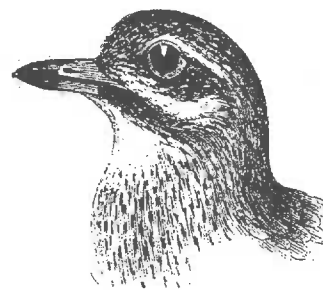
evaporate- to draw moisture from, leaving only the solid portion.

evergreen- a plant which has green leaves year round.

exoskeleton- an outer skeleton or shell.

extinct- an organism that no longer exists.

femur- the thigh bone



food chain- a sequence of organisms in which each member of the chain feeds on the member below it.

food pyramid- a food chain that demonstrates the passage and loss of energy as different levels of consumers feed on each other.

food web- interconnected food chains in an ecosystem.

gizzard- birds have two stomachs: the gizzard is the bird's second stomach, where digestion is completed.

habitat- the arrangement of food, water, shelter, and space suitable to an organism's needs.

halophyte- a salt-loving plant; a plant that grows in saline soil.

herbivore- an animal that feeds only on plants.

high tide- the tide when the water reaches its highest level.

hydrometer- a tool for measuring the density of a liquid.

incisors- the front teeth, usually used for cutting.

incubate- to keep eggs warm until hatching.

inflorescence- a flower cluster

interdependent- mutual dependence.

introduced- a plant or animal brought to a locality by humans, not native to the locality.

invasive- describes a plant or animal species which is not native to an area. Usually, it is called "invasive" because it outcompetes native plants or animals, leaving them without enough habitat in which to live.

invertebrate- an animal without a backbone.

larva (plural larvae)- an insect's early stage of development after hatching from an egg and before becoming a pupa.

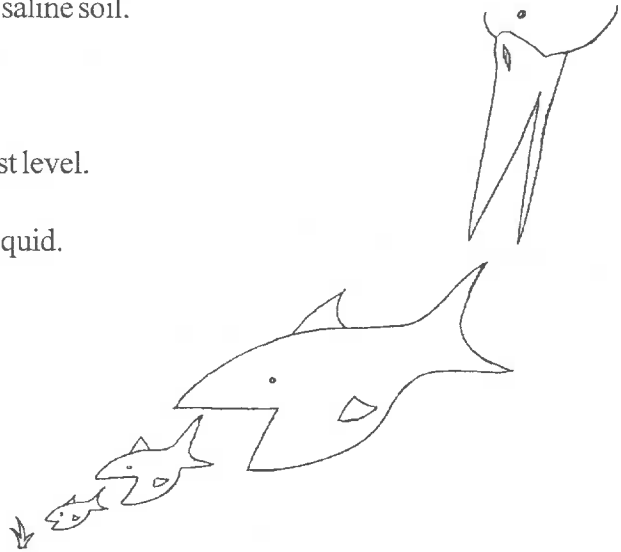
levees- walls or dikes built to contain water, in a particular area (ex: salt ponds of SF Bay).

low tide- the tide when the water reaches its lowest level.

metamorphosis- the changes in form and structure that an animal undergoes during its life.

metropolis- a very large city.

microscopic- visible only with a microscope.



migration- the act of moving (usually seasonally) from one place to another for feeding or breeding purposes.

molar- one of the broad back teeth used for grinding food.

molt- to shed an outer covering, such as feathers or skin, which is replaced by a new growth.

mountain divides- the highest elevation of a land form; water falling on each side drains into different watersheds and collections sites. Also called "ridge lines".

mudflat- the area of salty soil between the water and marsh plants.

native- a plant or animal belonging to a locality, not brought to the locality by humans.

nectar- a sweet liquid, which is mostly sugar, that plants secrete for insects to eat.

nocturnal- active during the night.

nutrients- any substances which provide energy for growth (such as food, vitamin, minerals). When materials decompose, their nutrients are released.

ocean- the body of salt water that covers approximately 72% of the earth's surface.

omnivore- an organism that eats both plants and animals.

organism- a living thing.

owl pellet- the undigested remains of what an owl ate; it includes the fur, feathers, and bones of the animals that the owl preyed upon.

perennial- having a lifespan of more than two years.

photosynthesis- utilization of light energy combined with carbon dioxide and water to produce simple sugars (food) and oxygen.

phytoplankton- small plants that drift in the water current (can be viewed with a microscope).

plankton- small plants and animals that drift in the water.

pollen- tiny grain-like spores which fertilize the eggs of a plant.

pollutants- waste materials that contaminate air, soil, or water.

pollution- contamination of the environment, especially with human-made waste materials.

predator- an animal that hunts, catches, and eats other animals (organisms).

prediction- to guess what is going to happen before it happens; a hypothesis.

premolars- the teeth located in front of the molar teeth.

prey- an animal killed for food.

proboscis- a long flexible nose or snout.

producer- an organism with chlorophyll which uses light energy and nutrients to make its own food; the first level in food chains. Green plants are producers.

pupa (plural pupae)- the insect's stage of development during which it changes from larva to adult.

regurgitate- to spit up.

ridge lines- the highest elevation of a land form; water falling on each side drains into different watersheds and collection sites. Also called "mountain divides".

river- a large natural stream of water emptying into a large body of water, such as an ocean or lake, and is usually fed along its course by converging tributaries or streams.

rodents- any of a group of small mammals with sharp gnawing teeth, such as mice, rats and gophers.

runoff- an overflow of water which cannot be absorbed by soil or vegetation; it drains into water channels such as rivers, creeks, or streams.

runoff pollution- pollution, such as pesticides and fertilizers, which gets washed away by runoff water (rain, lawns, etc.); runoff water can carry pollution far away from its source and deposit it in the Bay, where it can harm wildlife.

salinity- related to the amount of dissolved salts in the water.

salt marsh- a salt water, normally tidal, wetland.

salt pond- a human-made, diked, flat area filled with bay water and used for the production of salt through the process of evaporation.

sanitary sewer system- a system of drains and pipes connecting the sinks and toilets in our homes and businesses to the sewage treatment plant.

sediment- fine materials, such as small pieces of rock, that settle to the bottom of water.

sewage treatment plant- a place which cleans the water from our indoor use and discharges most of the treated water to the Bay. Some of the water is recycled and used for irrigation.

shorebird- wading birds that frequent shores of oceans, rivers, and marshes.

shrub- a plant smaller than a tree and with several woody stems from the base.

silt- small mineral grains in soil, ranging in diameter from 0.002 to 0.05 mm. Soil is composed of three particle sizes: sand, silt, and clay (from coarsest to finest). Soils vary depending on their percentage of these components. When silt settles out, it tends to clog water systems because it is so fine.

slough- a slow-moving body of water with muddy banks.

stamen- the part of a flower which produces pollen.

storm drain system- a system of drains which start at street level and head directly to creeks or the Bay. Water flowing in this system is not treated.

succulent- plants with thick, fleshy leaves or stems that conserve moisture.

symbiosis- a close relationship between two different organisms in which both species benefit.

tide- the “rising and falling” of the ocean primarily due to the motion of the moon and sun.

talons- sharp claws, toenails of hawks and owls.

toxin- a chemical substance causing illness or death when absorbed even in small quantities.

upland- a higher and drier area of land that does not collect water.

vertebrate- an animal with a backbone.

watershed- a region that drains into a creek, river, ocean, or other body of water.

watershed address- the body of water into which surface water from your home or school flows after it rains.

wetland- an area that, at least periodically, has waterlogged soils and supports plants adapted to wet soil. Bogs, salt marshes, seasonal wetlands, and mangroves are examples of wetlands.

zooplankton- small animals that drift in the water current (can be viewed with a microscope).